



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Equitable Community Engagement Services for Southwestern Medical District Urban Streetscape Project

Solicitor:
Texas Trees Foundation
2906 Swiss Ave
Dallas, Texas 75204

Submission Released: **December 4, 2019**
Submission Deadline: **December 23, 2019**

PURPOSE

The Texas Trees Foundation (“Texas Trees”) is seeking qualifications from firms and organizations wishing to provide equitable community engagement services for the Southwestern Medical District (“SWMD”) Urban Streetscape Project in Dallas, Texas. Equitable stakeholder engagement will be the cornerstone of the project. Texas Trees desires to build a team that can collectively create a robust and equitable engagement process that engages the community in creative and thought-provoking new ways and empowers those traditionally underserved communities to co-design the project so that is accessible and meaningful to all appropriate constituencies.

BACKGROUND

The Texas Trees Foundation, formerly the Dallas Parks Foundation, was established in 1982 as a 501(c)3 organization. In 1988 the Foundation merged with Treescapes/Dallas Inc. and became known as the Dallas Trees and Parks Foundation. Major projects included securing the donation of the original 3.7-mile right of way for the Katy Trail and Pioneer Plaza which remains one of the City’s most popular tourist attractions. Recently two major studies for the City of Dallas: State of the Dallas Urban Forest Report and the Dallas Urban Heat Mitigation Plan.

Texas Trees serves as a catalyst in creating a new green legacy for North Texas through transformational, research-based projects that educate and mobilize the public to activate the social, economic, environmental, and health benefits that trees and urban forestry provide.

The Southwestern Medical District Urban Streetscape Plan represents a bold new vision for a major economic hub for the City of Dallas, North Texas region and for a sustainable and healthy SWMD. As with all the Texas Trees projects, this initiative will help to unite, through a collaborative process, the three medical institutions and surrounding community to create a medical district that is safe, beautiful, interesting, and serves all people. This project takes the current challenges of the District and through a cooperative effort redefines the boundaries so that there is a cohesive campus that will better fill the needs of the district users.

The SWMD is an economic hub for the City of Dallas and delivers world-renowned health care in partnership with innovative world-class research and education. Bordered by Mockingbird Lane, Medical District Drive, Stemmons Freeway (I-35) and Maple Avenue, the District is 3 miles northwest of Downtown Dallas and 3 miles south of Love Field. Three major hospital systems, Parkland Health and Hospital System, Children’s Health Dallas and the UT Southwestern Medical Center, are surrounded by various businesses and residential mixed-use projects.

Users of the District - 2.9 million patients and visitors; 4,000 medical and nursing students; 37,000 employees; world-renowned doctors; and 37,000 neighbors living in and adjacent to the District¹ - are hoping for an area that quilts together ideas, strategies and a vision to create an easily accessible area that connects people and a functional infrastructure for a better quality of life for all. They envision a place where they can sit and read and contemplate or celebrate their latest diagnosis, share their fears and hopes, and a place that gently meets their needs for a quick lunch out of the hospital cafeteria; a place where access is easy, and friends can congregate. They are asking for a parkway that is designed for the future, where innovation is designed into the infrastructure to accommodate quiet autonomous vehicles, smart irrigation and healthy.

¹ Dallas County Census Tracts 4.01, 4.04, 4.05, 4.06, 6.01, and 100.

Findings from the Urban Streetscape Master Plan determined that the SWMD's aging infrastructure, 8-miles of missing sidewalks, no bicycle trails, and a lack of connectivity result in an unattractive environment that makes it harder to recruit and retain the best doctors, employees, and students. Extensive stakeholder meetings and detailed feedback on the conditions of the District confirmed that a change was needed. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure are limited and inconsistent. Intersections are daunting and unsafe for pedestrian crossings, further discouraging pedestrian activity on the corridor.

EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW & SAMPLE SCOPE OF SERVICES

The cornerstone of the SWMD Urban Streetscape Project will be an equitable engagement process. Implementation of the project, starting with Phase I improvements to Harry Hines Boulevard, will be directly tied to stakeholder concerns, desires, input, and feedback. In order to do so, Texas Trees wants to depart from conventional forms of outreach to ensure the community members, particularly those in and around the district, are directing the project. The desired outcome is to create a sustainable constituency that can have an open and ongoing dialogue throughout the duration of the project and beyond.

SWMD has a wide range of different users - patients and visitors; medical professionals, employees and staff; medical and nursing students; business owners and patrons; and the neighbors living in and adjacent to the District - each with different needs and desires. To name a few:

- patients in the area need access to greenspace for reflection and healing;
- visitors with physical limitations and disabilities have mobility and accessibility requirements; and
- institutions in the District want to improve the quality of life for current and future employees and staff; and
- long-time residents, predominantly those of color and lower income, are concerned with the further gentrification of their community and subsequent displacement.

The team's engagement efforts must be guided by the following principle²:

Quality of life outcomes, including **healthy environments** and **mobility**, are **equitably experienced** by the people currently living and working in the District, as well as for new people moving in. Public and private investments, programs, and policies in the area should **meet the needs of community members**, including historically marginalized communities, and **reduce social disparities**, taking into account **past history and current conditions**.

As such, the team will create and conduct an **inclusive and equitable community engagement process** that will:

- **Listen** | Solicit insights and feedback on the design concepts in a manner that is equitable, accessible and targeted to hear from a large group of representative stakeholders
- **Learn** | Use stakeholder needs, concerns, and preferences to inform the eventual project design
- **Empower** | Enable stakeholders to participate in and have ownership of the redesign of their space
- **Engage** | Consult with decision-makers and government officials to determine the best options for addressing stakeholder needs in the SWMD design

² Adapted from the Government Alliance of Race and Equity's definition of equitable development ([Equitable Development as a Tool to Advance Racial Equity](#), Government Alliance on Race and Equity, 2016).

- **Inform** | Update stakeholders on project activities such as the benefits associated with the project, aggregation of comments, the rationale for design concepts and decisions, the progress made, and the process moving forward
- **Communicate** | Engage in a dialogue with stakeholders on activities within the district, project-related or otherwise

Ultimately, the SWMD equitable engagement process must ensure that all people, especially historically marginalized voices, have a direct bridge to express their needs, goals, and desires and incorporate their voices into an actionable design plan.

Texas Trees is seeking a range of professional community engagement services for the support on crafting and implementing a public engagement process. The engagement process will include four parts:

1. **Community Outreach & Idea Generation** | Establish connections, trust, communication methods, and an understanding of the community's unique needs and desires.
2. **Design-Specific Input & Feedback Solicitation** | Empower community members to design a space that serves their needs and improves their quality of life.
3. **Implementation Engagement Activities** | Involve community members in the development and construction process through communication and programming
4. **Continued & Ongoing Engagement** | Close the loop by bringing the community into the space, sharing information (project-related or otherwise), and making connections for future events.

Appropriate services may include:

- Mapping social assets, networks, and connections to inform Plan creation
- Crafting an Equitable Engagement Plan to guide the process
- Developing innovating programming design to reach new and traditionally underserved audiences
- Collecting and/or synthesizing information received for the design team
- Preparing materials for outreach and engagement events
- Planning and/or facilitating outreach and engagement events
- Providing technological resources for an effective and efficient engagement process

Texas Trees will craft an appropriate scope of work in collaboration with selected firm(s).

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Texas Trees is hoping to build a team that can collectively create a robust equitable engagement program. To submit qualifications, the team **does not** have to provide a full suite of services (e.g. the submitting firm could provide a robust program for one phase of the engagement process or has expertise in crafting an equitable engagement plan). However, firms are encouraged to bring additional partners into their submission.

We are seeking an equitable engagement team with:

- Desire to engage the community in creative and thought-provoking new ways
- A commitment to developing innovative programming designed to enable and empower historically marginalized and underserved audiences to own the redesign of their community
- Experience conducting outreach and engagement for a broad range of stakeholder groups
- Demonstrated capacity to collaboratively develop and execute an equitable engagement program

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Beyond the scope of the Southwestern Medical District project, Texas Trees is also considering seeking similar services for the Foundation's other projects and the organization as a whole. As such, when reviewing the submissions, Texas Trees will be considering the opportunities that lie within these other endeavors and potential areas for crossover.

SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

By **Monday December 23, 2019 at 5:00 PM CST**, please submit a single PDF that includes the following:

- **Cover Letter** | a brief letter introducing your firm and a high-level approach to the project (no more than 2 pages).
- **Firm Profile** | a firm overview including a list of in-house services.
- **Project Qualifications** | up to 8 relevant prior projects that exemplify the firm's ability to innovate, reach new audiences, and work collaboratively. These should include descriptions, images, rough timelines, approximate budgets, outcomes, and the total number of people engaged.
- **Project References** | contact information for at least 3 prior clients for which the firm has provided similar services.
- **Resumes of Key Staff** | resumes, bios, and hourly rates (if applicable) for up to 3 key personnel, identifying the partner-in-charge and day-to-day project manager

Questions and requests for clarification regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing to Emily Fitzgerald at emily@texastrees.org by **Thursday December 12, 2019 at 12:00 PM CST**. All emails should be sent with the subject line: "Equitable Engagement Services RFQ Questions." All questions received and their respective questions will be posted on the Texas Trees website on the Southwestern Medical District Project page (<https://www.texastrees.org/projects/southwestern-medical-district>) by **Monday December 16, 2019 at 5:00 PM CST**.

Final submission should be sent in a **link to download a single PDF document** to Emily Fitzgerald at emily@texastrees.org by the deadline. Submissions received after this time will not be reviewed. All emails should be sent with the subject line: "Equitable Engagement Services RFQ Submission"

EVALUATION PROCESS

The timeline for building the engagement team will be dependent on the submissions received. Below are the dates for submitting qualifications and tentative evaluation timeline.

December 4, 2019	RFQ Released
December 12, 2019	Deadline for submitting RFQ questions at 12:00 PM CST
December 16, 2019	Questions received and responses posted online by 5:00 PM CST
December 23, 2019	Deadline for submitting qualifications at 5:00 PM CST
January 6, 2019	Short-listed submitters contacted to schedule interviews, if necessary
January 13-17, 2019	Interviews (in-person preferred) with selected short-list firms, if necessary